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VIII. — *Claudian*

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IN view of the paucity of really great names in the literary annals of the fourth Christian century, one need hardly offer an apology for selecting Claudian as a representative of that epoch. His activity, however, as indicated both by his surviving works and by the absence of any other evidence, comes at the very end of the century and extends an equal distance into the next; in other words, covers the years 395 to 404.

Claudian's works, and the scanty amount of external testimony which we possess, have been subjected to such careful scrutiny from almost every possible standpoint, that it is only in trivialities that anything like a new contribution can be made. The most that the present writer can hope to do is to give some general impressions derived from a recent study of the poet, together with one or two small points which may either have escaped notice or have been considered of no importance. The illustrations are his own, although some, if not all, of them have already been used by others.

The literary history of pagan Rome begins and ends with a miracle. Shortly after Livius Andronicus had marked the beginning of the epoch by the first fruits of his versatile career, an Umbrian, apparently of humble origin, whose educational advantages, so far as we are able to judge, had been of the slightest, gained such command of the Latin language, although it was in all probability not his vernacular, as to lead an eminent philologist and critic to declare, that if the Muses had chosen to speak Latin, they would have done so in the diction of Plautus.¹ Continued research has tended to justify this apparently extravagant statement, as well as to show that this marvellous Umbrian had an equal mastery of the art of writing verse; for his *numeri innumeri*² were probably

¹ Aelius Stilo; see Quint. x, 1, 99.

² Gell. I, 24, 3.

so called because of their variety, rather than from any lack of a strict observance of metrical values, as they existed in his day. As in the case of Shakespeare, we are confronted with the alternative of declaring that Plautus did not write the plays which have come down to us under his name (a position for which there is as much, or rather as little, evidence in the one case as in the other), or of explaining his performance as the result of that elusive quality known as genius. The latter explanation might appear to be a begging of the question, but it is sometimes the only resort. Thus it is to the appearance during her Golden Age of an unusual number of men of genius that Wilamowitz attributes the literary eminence of Athens.³

No less phenomenal than the advent of Plautus at the dawn of Rome's literary history is that of Claudian in the twilight of the fourth century. He too was not of Roman birth, nor even an Italian. The honor of producing him has been claimed for Spain, for Sicily, and for Etruria, not to mention other countries; but he undoubtedly spent his early life in Alexandria, and sundry references in his writings indicate that he was also born there.⁴ The same inference may be drawn from Sidonius⁵ and apparently from Suidas,⁶ and his Alexandrian origin is now all but universally accepted. Johannes Lydus⁷ calls him 'Ο Παφλαγῶν ὁ ποιητής, but in the light of other evidence it does not seem probable that he refers to Claudian's origin, any more than Gellius, when he speaks of the *superbia Campana* of Naevius' epitaph,⁸ means to imply that the early Roman poet was a Campanian. The Campanians were notoriously proud and the Paphlagonians seem to have had the unenviable reputation of being *vani-loqui*.⁹

³ *Kult. d. Gegenw.*, I, 8, 228.

⁴ *Carm. min.* 22, 56 ff.; 19, 3; etc.

⁵ *Carm.* 9, 271.

⁶ *S. v. Κλαυδιανός*. The identity with Claudian is questioned by some.

⁷ *De Mag.* I, 47.

⁸ *Gell.* I, 24, 1.

⁹ Teuffel, *Gesch. röm. Lit.*⁶ III, p. 357, and Birt, *Mon. Germ. hist. auct. ant.* x, pp. iii ff.

The assumption that Claudian was the son of Latin-speaking parents and that his father was a government official seems to lack any kind of evidence. As an Alexandrian, his native tongue was doubtless Greek and he seems to have written in that language before he began to compose in Latin. Whether the number of his Latin writings greatly exceeded that of his Greek works, as Teuffel asserts, is not absolutely certain; the scanty remains of the latter and the circumstances of Claudian's life, so far as we know them, support the statement; but the well-known inscription from Trajan's forum ¹⁰ compares him with Homer as well as with Vergil — a bit of flattery from which it is probably unsafe to draw any conclusion.

Of Claudian's life we know very little. It is evident that he had a good education; indeed, was in the highest sense of the term *doctus*, as was to be expected of one reared under the shadow of the great Library. He tells us that he first came to Rome in 395; ¹¹ and during the ten years that he made his home there he was out of the city for five, apparently in attendance upon Stilicho, returning in 400. At some time after 404 he went back to Egypt ¹² and through the good offices of Serena, the wife of his patron, he was married to a lady of African, perhaps Alexandrian, birth, who possessed both wealth and position.¹³ The inscription tells us that he held the titles of *notarius* and *tribunus*. The time and the manner of his death are unknown. Whether he lived on in his native land after the downfall of his powerful protector, or with other friends of Stilicho was put to death, cannot be determined. Some have thought that he fell victim to the vengeance of that Hadrianus to whom he addresses the somewhat abject *Deprecatio*.¹⁴

¹⁰ *C. I. L.* VI, 1710; Dessau, 2949.

¹¹ *Carm. min.* 41, 13 ff. This is also taken to mean that he first wrote (or published) Latin poetry at that date.

¹² Cf. 25, 1-6 and *Carm. min.* 31, 55 ff. None of his works can be dated later than 404.

¹³ *Carm. min.* 31, 43 f.

¹⁴ *Ib.* 22.

In spite of the advantage which Claudian had in education and opportunities, his achievement was greater than that of Plautus, by as much as it is less difficult to be a pioneer in a new and virgin field than to infuse the breath of life into dry bones. Plautus dealt with material which was fresh and novel to his public; Claudian succeeded in the more difficult attempt to give new life to the pagan mythology and to immortalize "the trivial achievements of a mean and sterile age."¹⁵ He almost performed the impossible feat, which Vergil and Horace had shrunk from undertaking, of writing a successful epic on contemporary history. To his credit be it said that he owed his success neither to forced and exaggerated language, as did the writers of Nero's time, nor to metrical (or rather, unmetrical) extravagances, after the manner of our writers of 'free verse.' His poetry is generally regarded as a remarkable 'throw-back' to the best period of Silver Latin. He is most frequently compared with Statius, a comparison which is made natural by the general character of his writings, and Mackail¹⁶ declares that among the poets of that epoch "he is excelled in wealth of language and fertility of imagination, if at all, by Statius alone." Leo¹⁷ awards him the palm over the poet of Domitian's court, asserting that Claudian revived the brilliance of Ovid's verse and the fluency of his diction. It is a highly probable suggestion of Boissier's,¹⁸ that it was because Claudian spent his youth and got his education in a place where Latin was not the vernacular that he was led to turn to the classic writers of early days and steep himself in their language and thought. In the same way the seclusion of the home gave the Roman matrons a diction which in Pliny's time recalled Plautus and Terence.¹⁹

Claudian's knowledge of Roman history is extensive and thorough.²⁰ That he was a reader of Sallust is made evident

¹⁵ Crees, *Claudian as an Historian*, 12.

¹⁶ *Lat. Lit.* 268.

¹⁷ *Kult. d. Gegenw.* 1, 8, 370.

¹⁸ *La fin du paganisme*, II, 238.

¹⁹ *Class. Rev.* xv, 452.

²⁰ See 8, 401 ff.; 24, 140 ff.; 26, 124 ff., etc., etc.

by his five allusions to the *Jugurthine War*,²¹ whose romantic story seems to have impressed him more strongly than the *Catiline*, which he does not mention. I have seen no allusion to the striking parallelism of 15, 441 ff., where he says of the Moors,

Conubia mille;
Non illis generis nexus, non pignora curae:
Sed numero languet pietas,

with *Jug.* 80, 6, where Sallust says of the same people, *Ea necessitudo apud Numidas Maurosque levis ducitur, quia singuli pro opibus quisque quam plurimas uxores . . . habent . . . ita animus multitudine distrahitur; nulla pro socia optinet, pariter omnes viles sunt.*

Claudian is so versed in mythological lore that one might readily believe him capable of meeting the tests which *Tiberius* used to apply to the grammarians of his day,²² or those which *Juvenal's* overworked and underpaid schoolteacher had to undergo.²³ His allusions, however, are never forced or of studied obscurity, although they are frequently grotesque in their application. Now and then he treats the myths in a jesting fashion, as in 21, 312 f.:

Argum fama canit centeno lumine cinctum
Corporis excubijs unam servasse iuvencam !

At other times his attitude is sceptical, as in 24, 230 ff.:

Ditabat rutilo quidquid Mida tangeret auro
(Fabula seu verum canitur) : tua copia vicit
Fontem Hermi tactumque Midæ, pluviamque Tonantis.

Again in 28, 475 f., speaking of the horses of *Rhesus* :

Quorum, si qua fides augentibus omnia Musis,
Impetus excessit Zephyros.

²¹ 15, 92 and 409; 21, 371; 26, 128; 28, 381.

²² Suet. *Tib.* 70, 3.

²³ *Juv.* 7, 233 ff.

Scepticism and flippancy are combined in 26, 14 ff.:

Licet omnia vates
In maius celebrata ferant ipsamque secandis
Argois trabibus iacent sudasse Minervam.

He shows equal knowledge in other lines: of trees,²⁴ of rivers,²⁵ of philosophical schools,²⁶ and of many other subjects; and as Glover says,²⁷ he can never resist the temptation to make a list.

There are some questions connected with Claudian to the discussion of which nothing convincing or decisive can be added until further evidence is forthcoming. One of these is his attitude towards Christianity, about which widely different conclusions have been based upon scanty and conflicting testimony. The question is a puzzling one. It is hard to understand how the poem called "de Salvatore" could have been written by one who was not at least nominally a Christian, or how the scurrilous verses of *Carm. min.* 50 could have come from the same hand. Jeep rejected the former, but it is accepted by the later editors as genuine. Glover, who does not consider Claudian a Christian, fails to mention this particular poem, perhaps because he regards it as spurious. The denials of his Christianity by Saint Augustine,²⁸ who calls him "a Christi nomine alienus," and by Orosius,²⁹ who refers to him as "paganus pervicacissimus," are explicit. Taken in connection with the pagan tone of his writings and his lavish use of the old mythology, they are by some regarded as decisive; but Birt³⁰ considers Augustine's statement to mean "scripta Claudiani aliena esse a nomine Christi profitendi," and believes that Orosius was careless. Birt also maintains³¹ that he was familiar with the Christian writers and even imitated them, but Glover says,³² "Claudian may have known something of the Christian scriptures, but I doubt if it was very much." That Claudian's actual belief

²⁴ 35, 107 ff.

²⁵ 17, 232 ff.; 28, 413 ff., etc.

²⁶ 17, 87 ff.

²⁷ *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*, 234.

²⁸ *Civ. Dei*, v, 26.

²⁹ vii, 35.

³⁰ *Op. cit.* p. lxiii.

³¹ *Op. cit.* p. lxiv f.

³² *Op. cit.* 234.

in the gods of Greece and Rome was no stronger than his Christianity (if he was a Christian) is indicated by passages already cited,³³ is a priori probable, and is not contradicted by the beginning of his diatribe against Rufinus,³⁴ where a change from an Epicurean view of the gods to a belief in their interest in human affairs is ascribed to the punishment of Stilicho's enemy. It seems most reasonable, with Birt, to regard Claudian as a nominal Christian. That the machinery of the pagan religion is described as in full working order, as Beugnot has pointed out,³⁵ while the allusions to Christianity are few in number, is not surprising in one who has so thoroughly assimilated the language and spirit of the great writers of pagan Rome.

Another closed question is that of Claudian's value as an historical source. This is discussed in convenient form in the prize essay of Crees.³⁶ It is generally agreed that the poet's accuracy is somewhat impaired by his intense and evident partiality (a paid panegyrist can hardly be impartial) and by the partisanship which led him to exalt and magnify the achievements of his patron Stilicho, and to veil his shortcomings, while lavishing all the resources of a remarkable facility in invective upon his enemies Rufinus and Eutropius. Crees, however, maintains³⁷ that this feature had less influence than the troubled circumstances of the age and the estrangement between East and West, which made it difficult, if not impossible, to get authentic news. In any event, Claudian is practically our only literary source of information for the period to which he belongs, and at least, as Glover remarks,³⁸ historians must admit his evidence on the general conditions of the day.

Claudian's success in the fields of the mythological and the historical epic is the more noteworthy in comparison with the previous post-Vergilian attempts in those lines, the *de*

³³ See p. 139 f. above.

³⁴ 3, 1 ff.

³⁵ *Hist. de la destr. du paganisme*, cited by Milman, note 117 on Gibbon, chap. xxx.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, Cambridge, Eng., 1908.

³⁷ P. 188.

³⁸ P. 248.

Bello Civili of Lucan, the *Punica* of Silius Italicus, the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus, and the *Thebais* and *Achilleis* of Statius. On the historical side the *Punica*, treating as it did events belonging to Rome's heroic age,³⁹ offered a more promising subject than the comparatively trivial occurrences of the late fourth century, and even the contest between Caesar and Pompey, though without the glamour of antiquity, was of far greater interest than the themes which fell to Claudian's lot. It were perhaps ungracious to suggest that he owed his greater measure of success to the brevity of his poems (the longest of them is but little over twelve hundred lines), yet it is doubtful whether even his brilliance could have held the attention and interest of a reader or auditor for eight or more books.

Claudian's flattery of the great men of his day has been justly criticized; yet he certainly has not outdone the adulation of Nero by Lucan, who declares⁴⁰ that all the horrors of the civil wars were worth while, if they paved the way for the coming of that worthy monarch; or the raptures of Statius⁴¹ at being honored with an invitation to dinner by Domitian. The flattery even of the great Augustan poets was sometimes no less extravagant,⁴² but it was more effectually disguised in a mythological dress and expressed as a rule in better taste. They have nothing so crude as the following lines addressed to Honorius:⁴³

Tu cum per altas impiger ilices
Freno citatum cornipedum reges
Ludentque ventis instabiles comae,
Telis iacebunt sponte tuis ferae
Gaudensque sacris vulneribus leo
Admittet hastam morte superbiore.

Here one is irresistibly reminded of Domitian's turbot and the "ipse capi voluit"⁴⁴ of the fisherman. In still closer

³⁹ C. H. Moore, *Class. Journ.* vi, 114. ⁴⁰ *Bell. Civ.* i, 33 ff. ⁴¹ *Silv.* iv, 2.

⁴² Cf. e.g. Hor. *Odes*, i, 2, and Verg. *Geor.* i, 33 ff.

⁴³ ii, 10 ff.

⁴⁴ *Juv.* 4, 69.

imitation of Juvenal the same incense is offered with somewhat more propriety to Diana : ⁴⁵

Ultro se voluere capi gaudentque videri
Tantae praeda deae ;

although the employment of the goddess and her nymphs to catch wild beasts for the adornment of Stilicho's triumph is surely not the least grotesque of Claudian's applications of mythology. ⁴⁶

Juvenal, *pace* Mackail, ⁴⁷ had a keen sense of humor. While we might wish that Claudian had written his lines to Honorius with his tongue in his cheek, there is no evidence of such an attitude. Some examples of a humorous treatment of mythological subjects have already been given, ⁴⁸ but as a rule he takes himself and his subjects very seriously and shows few signs of humor. He surely cannot establish a claim upon that saving grace by the time-honored pun on *ius*, ⁴⁹ when he says of a cook turned jurist that he is "prudens movendi iuris," or by the somewhat more original effort in

Tu potes alterius studiis haerere Minervae
Et telas, non tela pati. ⁵⁰

One very commendable feature of his writings is the all but total absence of objectionable passages or of pornographic appeal, even in the caustic satire directed against Eutropius and Rufinus and in the so-called Fescenninae.

Claudian so abounds in reminiscences of earlier writers, which are marshalled in formidable array in Jeep's edition, ⁵¹ that Crees was tempted to call him "the first of prize poets" ; ⁵² but he refrains from so doing because "his transcendent power amounts almost to a difference in kind and lifts him out of this despised category." It is true that even when we eliminate such striking (?) parallels as *obstupuit visu, flamma*

⁴⁵ 24, 342.

⁴⁶ For additional examples see Glover, *op. cit.* 235.

⁴⁷ *Op. cit.* 222.

⁴⁸ See p. 139 above.

⁴⁹ 20, 347.

⁵⁰ 18, 273.

⁵¹ Vol. II, praef. lxxvi ff.

⁵² *Op. cit.* 7.

Chimaerae, devenere locum, oblitusque sui, and the like,⁵³ we have an abundance of undoubted reminiscences of Vergil, Horace, Statius, Lucan, and other earlier poets, and it is possible that an equally careful comparison with the best prose writers (in particular the historians) might reveal other parallels of the kind cited above on p. 139. But if we compare these reminiscent passages with their sources, we invariably find that it is the thought rather than the language which is reproduced. Thus, *Quis prodere tanta relatu | Funera, quis caedes possit deflere nefandas?*⁵⁴ at once suggests *Quis cladem illius noctis, quis funera fando | Explicet aut possit lacrimis aequare labores?*⁵⁵ but only *quis, funera*, and *possit* are common to the two passages. Even when the connection is closer, as in *Quid non longa valebit | Permutare dies?*⁵⁶ and *Tantum aevi longinqua valet mutare vetustas*,⁵⁷ we have a change in the language which suggests a conscious avoidance of 'tags.' A striking instance of a change in the language of a similar thought is to be found in the following lines:⁵⁸

Ceum murmurat alti
Impacata quies pelagi, cum flamine fracto
Durat adhuc saevitque tumor dubiumque per aestum
Lassa recedentis fluitant vestigia venti.

The simile here is the same as in the beautiful passage in Ovid's *Fasti*:⁵⁹

Ut solet a magno fluctus languescere flatu,
Sed tamen a vento qui fuit unda tumet,
Sic, quamvis aberat placitae praesentia formae,
Quem dederat praesens forma manebat amor;

but the language is quite different: so much so that in any other poet than Claudian one would hardly suspect imitation.⁶⁰

⁵³ It is fair to say that Jeep recognized the questionable nature of some of these parallels; why he did not eliminate them does not appear.

⁵⁴ 3, 249 f.

⁵⁵ Verg. *Aen.* II, 361 f.

⁵⁶ 20, 244 f.

⁵⁷ Verg. *Aen.* III, 415.

⁵⁸ 3, 70 ff.

⁵⁹ II, 775 ff.

⁶⁰ I have not found this example in Jeep's list or elsewhere.

In connection with this general topic the uncertain nature of subjective criticism is illustrated by the following comment of W. C. Summers: ⁶¹ "Coleridge actually admires 'his gift of pleasingly expressing the same thought in different language.'" One thinks of the famous defence of Marcus Aemilius Scaurus: ⁶² Varius Severus Sucronensis Aemilium Scaurum regia mercede corruptum imperium populi Romani prodidisse ait, Aemilius Scaurus huic se adfinem esse culpae negat; utri creditis? The assignment of the part of Scaurus to the poet or to his critic depends entirely upon one's point of view.

The recent article of Professor Steele on "The Similes in Roman Epic Poetry" ⁶³ does not include Claudian, and hence suggests a word or two about his use of this figure, of which there are some 97 examples. ⁶⁴ Claudian's similes are both numerous and varied, and they are unusually highly developed, as would be expected of a poet who regularly elaborates where Vergil suggests. ⁶⁵ Not a few of his similes are strikingly original, at least so far as any recent reading of mine is concerned. In 20, 423 ff. an undisciplined army is compared, first to a riderless horse, then to a ship without its helmsman, and finally to a whale deserted by its pilot-fish. The first two parts of the simile are of course not at all novel, but they are noteworthy for their sententious brevity; the third attracts attention because of its originality and its elaboration. Many of Claudian's similes are drawn from everyday life, as when the consternation of the rebellious barbarians at the rapid approach of Stilicho is compared to the terror of slaves, whose master, reported dead, returns and surprises them in a revel; ⁶⁶ also those of children who rejoice in the freedom given them by their father's absence until they are threatened with a sudden danger, ⁶⁷ of a nurse directing

⁶¹ *Companion to Latin Studies*, p. 646.

⁶² Val. Max. III, 7, 8.

⁶³ *T. A. P. A.* XLIX, 83 ff.

⁶⁴ Glover, *op. cit.* 224. Glover's somewhat full treatment of the subject may have led to Steele's omission of Claudian.

⁶⁵ Glover, *op. cit.* 235.

⁶⁶ 26, 366 ff.

⁶⁷ 20, 509 ff.

the tasks of a group of girls,⁶⁸ and of a monkey arrayed in a ridiculous garb by a boy.⁶⁹ One of the most highly elaborated similes is that of the voyage of Bacchus.⁷⁰ Other noteworthy examples are the comparison of Maria and her daughter to a young laurel growing under the shade of the parent tree or to two roses of Paestum,⁷¹ that of the ostrich hiding its head in the sand,⁷² and that of a pirate ship which inadvertently attacks a war-galley.⁷³ Even some of the more familiar comparisons attract attention by their treatment; as, for example, that of the cattle called home by their master,⁷⁴ where we have a pretty picture which it is difficult to regard as the result of reading rather than of personal observation and a genuine love of the country.

Claudian's elaboration is such that single lines are not often noteworthy. The following may be mentioned: *Poenamque luit formidine poenae*,⁷⁵ *Asperius nihil est humili cum surgit in altum*,⁷⁶ *Venditus ipse | Vendere cuncta cupit*,⁷⁷ *Mobile mutatur semper cum principe vulgus*.⁷⁸ The alliteration of the last two sentences is carried to a higher degree in *Si mea mansuris meruerunt moenia nasci . . . auguriis*⁷⁹ and *Romani scelerum semper sprevere ministros*.⁸⁰

Claudian's references to the sea are numerous, and while he perhaps refers more frequently to its stormy aspects, his attitude on the whole is rather that of a sea-faring Greek than of a sea-shunning Roman. One of his similes has already illustrated this feature of his writings,⁸¹ and the following passage seems to show familiarity with the art of sailing:

Velut arbiter alni
Nubilis Aegaeo quam turbine vexat Orion,
Exiguo clavi flexu declinat aquarum

⁶⁸ 20, 370.⁶⁹ 18, 303.⁷⁰ 24, 362 ff.⁷¹ 10, 244 ff.⁷² 20, 310 ff.⁷³ 28, 132 ff.⁷⁴ 26, 408 ff.⁷⁵ 5, 140.⁷⁶ 18, 181.⁷⁷ 18, 206 f.⁷⁸ 8, 302.⁷⁹ 15, 28.⁸⁰ 15, 270.

⁸¹ See p. 144 above. Other references to the sea are 3, 274 ff.; 15, 219 ff.; 17, 42 ff.; 24, 361 ff.; 26, 209 ff.; 26, 271 ff.

Verbera, nunc recta, nunc obliquante carina
Callidus, et pelagi caelique obnilitur irae.⁸²

In one passage he gives us a much needed word to describe the shivering of a sail in the wind⁸³ when he says of a wrinkled face: Nec vento sic vela tremunt.⁸⁴

As I said in the beginning, and as I have abundantly demonstrated, one must descend to trivialities if one would say anything new of Claudian. I have always had a purely amateur interest in the heavenly bodies, ever since my first reading of Vergil in school led me to note the familiar stars and constellations. Hence in my recent reading of Claudian I was at once struck by a *περὶ τὰ μετάρσια πολυπραγμοσύνη*, such as the first argument of the tragedy *Rhesus* with somewhat less reason attributes to Euripides. I have compared Claudian in this respect with one or two familiar Roman poets, and I hope at some future time to carry the comparison farther. At present I venture to say, that excepting such technical works as the *Aratea* of Cicero and of Germanicus and the *Astronomica* of Manilius, Claudian's allusions to the stars are more numerous and more extended than those of any other Roman poet. This is certainly true in comparison with Vergil, Horace, and Statius. The last-named has about as many references as Claudian, but they are briefer and more casual, being usually employed to describe the weather or to indicate geographical location. Claudian, on the contrary, not only has the conventional references to Arcturus, "the rainy Hyades," and "the twin Bears" with their various synonyms, but long passages in which numerous constellations are mentioned in a manner which suggests sympathetic observation, but may be only a display of Alexandrine erudition. In either case such detailed references are uncommon. It will suffice to quote one or two examples; for instance:

Non inter geminos Anguis glaciale Triones
Sibilet, immodico nec frigore saeviat Ursa.

⁸² 21, 286 ff.

⁸³ See *P. A. P. A.* xli, lxiii.

⁸⁴ 18, 113.

Non toto fremat ore Leo, nec brachia Cancri
 Urat atrox aestas, madidae nec prodigus urnae
 Semina praerupto dissolvat Aquarius imbre.
 Phrixus roseo producat fertile cornu
 Ver Aries, pingues nec grandine tundat olivas
 Scorpius; autumnus maturet germina Virgo,
 Lenior et gravidis adlatret Sirius uvis.⁸⁵

And again :

Stat gelidis Auriga plagis; vestigia fratris
 Germanae servant Hyades, Cygnique sodalis
 Lacteus extensus adspergit circulus alas;
 Stelliger Eridanus sinuatis flexibus errans
 Clara Noti convexa rigat gladioque tremendum
 Gurgite sidereo subterluit Oriona.⁸⁶

The critics from Gibbon⁸⁷ to Mackail⁸⁸ have not differed greatly in their general estimates of Claudian. The dubious honor of being first of panegyrists⁸⁹ may be granted him without hesitation and without a second. All agree in recognizing his remarkable poetic gifts, which enable him to express his thoughts, and to reproduce those of others, in effective and beautiful language, and to give life and charm to commonplace material. Because of the unattractive nature of much of his subject-matter he is not likely to be read, especially in these busy days, otherwise than in selections, except by those who are particularly interested in the history and life of the fourth century, or those who are actuated by some other special reason. Those who read him entire will find the task lightened by many fine passages and by not a few which challenge admiration for the power of description which they show or for their brilliant rhetoric. But one is more likely to admire than to love him; for, as Mackail remarks with his usual felicity,⁹⁰ his work has the clear, cold

⁸⁵ 22, 458 ff.

⁸⁶ 28, 172 ff. See also 1, 25 ff.; 3, 241 ff. and 364 ff.; 10, 271 ff.; 17, 120 and 299; 26, 134 ff., 209 ff., and 245 ff.; *Carm. min.* 28, 8 and 40, 16.

⁸⁷ *Decline and Fall*, chap. xxx.

⁸⁸ *Op. cit.* 267 ff.

⁸⁹ Glover, *op. cit.* 221.

⁹⁰ *Op. cit.* 270.

brilliance of the Alexandrine school, unwarmed by the rising tide of romanticism or by a sympathetic nature. Glover and Moore lay stress with reason on his love of Rome (the love of an *inquilinus civis*, which is often greater, or at least more demonstrative, than that of the native-born) and his appreciation of her eternal grandeur. Whatever may be thought of his attitude towards Christianity, as a writer he is properly classed as the last poet of pagan Rome,⁹¹ and he is worthy of a high rank in the guild.

⁹¹ Cf. Mackail, *op. cit.* 268: "He was the last eminent man of letters who was a professed pagan" — rather too strong a statement for the evidence.